

## Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 971  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT FR  
SUBJ: SUCCESSION TO LYON MAYORALTY

ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, THE ALREADY PRECARIOUS PHYSICAL CONDITION  
OF  
LYON MAYOR LOUIS PRADEL HAS SUBSTANTIALLY DETERIORATED IN THE PAST  
FEW  
WEEKS AND SOME SAY HE IS NOT EXPECTED TO SURVIVE MUCH LONGER. LEADING  
LOCAL PAPERS, SUCH AS THE PROGRESS, ARE OPENLY PRESSING FOR ISSUANCE  
OF OFFICIAL BULLETINS. PARTICULARLY NOTABLE WERE HIS ABSENCE FROM  
ALL NOVEMBER 11TH CEREMONIES AND FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER FROM THE  
CHAIRMANSHIP OF COURLY, THE URBAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF  
GREATER LYON.

GIVEN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE QUESTION OF PRADEL'S SUCCESSION IS THE  
TOPIC OF THE DAY. MOST LOCAL BETTING FAVORS SENATOR FRANCISQUE  
COLLOMB, THE QUIET-SPOKEN, NON-ALLIGNED INDUSTRIALIST. COLLOMB, WHO  
IS

PRESIDENT OF LYON'S INTERNATIONAL FAIR, WAS BORN IN THE NEARBY AIN  
DEPARTMENT OF SAINT-RAMBERT EN BUGEY, DECEMBER 19, 1910. A GRADUATE  
OF THE COLLEGE LAMARTINE AT BELLEY, HE HAS DEVELOPED A HIGHLY  
SUCCESSFUL CHEMICAL ENGRAVING PLANT. COLLOMB ALSO HAS BEEN ONE

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OF PRADEL'S

SEVERAL ASSOCIATE MAYORS FOR OVER TEN YEARS AND IS RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN GROOMED BY PRADEL TO TAKE OVER THE CITY GOVERNMENT.

THERE IS SOMEWHAT LESS TALK TODAY OF THE EARLIER OFT MENTIONED CANDIDACY OF DEPUTE AND FORMER MINISTER JACQUES SOUSTELLE. HE SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED OUT OF THE RUNNING HOWEVER. SOUSTELLE, 64, WAS A KEY MEMBER OF DE GAULLE'S STAFF IN ALGIERS DURING THE WAR, RESPONSIBLE FOR INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES. SUBSEQUENTLY HE WAS MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MINISTER OF COLONIES. IN 1955-56 HE WAS GOVERNOR GENERAL OF ALGERIA AND IN 1958-59 AGAIN MINISTER OF INFORMATION. IN 1961, HE SPLIT WITH DE GAULLE BY OPPOSING THE GENERAL'S ALGERIAN POLICY. INDICTED FOR TREASON, HE FLED FRANCE AND REMAINED IN ITALY UNTIL AMNESTIED IN 1968. NOW A MEMBER OF THE GROUP OF CENTRISTS, REFORMERS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, SOUSTELLE STRONGLY SUPPORTED GISCARD IN 1974 AND REPORTEDLY HAS EASY ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT.

AMONG OTHERS MENTIONED ARE WELL-KNOWN ATTORNEY LOUIS CHAINE, BROTHER OF THE RECENTLY MURDERED PRESIDENT OF THE CREDIT LYONNAIS. MAITRE CHAINE, BORN IN FRANCHEVILLE, RHONE DEPARTMENT, JUNE 30, 1917, IS PRESIDENT OF LYON'S REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR METRO CONSTRUCTION AND OF THE CIVIL HOSPITAL, ONE OF THE LARGEST IN FRANCE. HE ALSO PRESIDES A NATIONAL LAWYERS GROUP, NOTAIRES DE FRANCE.

THE SUCCESSION TO THE MAYORALTY OF THIS KEY CITY IS CERTAIN TO HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN MARCH. POST WILL FOLLOW THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND SUBMIT FURTHER REPORTS AS APPROPRIATE.

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